BC Ministry of Transportation and Highways Newsletter

Road Runner

Volume 35, Issue 5 Winter 1999

Road and bridge maintenance accord signed

Between 1994 and 1999, reductions to the ministry's operating budgets and increases in maintenance agreements required MoTH absorb $48.5 million in ministry program costs.

However, a recent decision to extend road and bridge maintenance contracts by three years will save money, protect workers and guarantee a high level of care for provincial transportation infrastructure.

Transportation and Highways Minister Harry Lali, B.C. Roadbuilders and Heavy Construction Association chairman Frank Rizzardo and B.C. Government and Services Employees Union director Dave Vipond officially signed the Road and Bridge Maintenance Accord in Kelowna on Sept. 21.

"This move saves up to $25 million over five years," said Lali. "We agreed to work with each maintenance contractor to decide how their contract can be adjusted to get the required savings. About one-third of the money will be saved by the contractors agreeing to a reduced work program. The remainder will come from such things as partnering initiatives and other arrangements, including reductions in the contractor's company profits."

The accord also provides for standardized training and new initiatives around apprenticeship, health and safety, health and welfare benefits as well as employment equity.

Contractors who do not wish to participate can choose to let their existing contract lapse on the original expiry date. In those cases, all members of the industry will have an opportunity to answer the resulting tender call. To date, 26 of 28 areas have been extended.

Two key MoTH people in the contract extension process were John Newhouse, manager of maintenance programs and Ric Meidinger, regional manager of rehab maintenance in Kamloops.

"Prior to the contract extensions, the ministry was faced with implementing an additional $2.75 million reduction for maintenance programs in the 1999/2000 fiscal year, which would have significantly impacted on road services and contractor's resources," Newhouse said. "The extensions mitigate those concerns, reduce the degree of service reduction and avoid the cost of re-tendering for the ministry."

Minister of Transportation and Highways, Harry Lali, reads the inscription on the new plaque at Manning Park Resort. Standing, left to right, are Hope Mayor Wilfried Vicktor, Princeton Town Councillor Dan Sulentich and Member of Parliament Jim Hart.

Hope-Princeton 50th anniversary

Highways Minister Harry Lali unveiled a plaque to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the opening of the Hope-Princeton Highway at a ceremony held Oct. 23 at the Manning Park Resort.

Dozens of residents from the Hope and Princeton areas attended the ceremony and heard speeches from Lali, Okanagan-Coquihalla M.P. Jim Hart, Hope Mayor Wilfried Vicktor and Inge Wilson of the Hope Chamber of Commerce.

Lali congratulated event organizers and paid tribute to the road builders who worked on the highway, including employees of current MoTH contractor Emil Anderson.

Honourable Harry Lali, Minister of Transportation and Highways

Message from the minister

As we approach the end of another busy year, I'd like to take this opportunity to extend my sincere holiday wishes to all members of the MoTH team. The combined efforts of our dedicated field and office staff made 1999 one of our most successful years ever.

Over this past 12 months, I have had the privilege to announce many new projects and view work in progress throughout the province. I'd like to thank all the staff I met along the way for their help, hard work and advice. Each of you can take pride in the meaningful contribution you have made to protect and improve the provincial transportation network.

With the holiday season upon us, special thanks go to those individuals who will be working over this period to safeguard the ministry during the Y2K transition. It is my hope that even those involved with the Y2K exercise will take some time to put work aside and experience the best of the season with family and friends.

In closing, may I remind ministry staff across the province to please drive safely over the holiday season. I look forward to working with you throughout the new year.

Former DM pens B.C. transportation history

Former DM R.G. Harvey has been far from idle since retiring from the ministry in 1983.

His three books on the provincial highway system, *The Coast Connection* and the recently-published two-volume set, *Carving the Western Path*, provide a comprehensive glimpse at the colourful history behind the provincial transportation network.

Drawing on the wealth of knowledge he acquired with the ministry between 1958 and 1983 and drawing on historical research, Harvey provides the kind of detail only an engineer in love with transportation can.

In the *Coast Connection*, he chronicles the 150 year effort to establish a road link from British Columbia's interior plateaus and valleys to the coast.

In *Carving the Western Path*, the author provides an engaging account of "the fight for transportation supremacy in British Columbia," between roads, rail and rivercraft. With words and photographs, he captures the flavour of the riverboat era on the lower Fraser and examines the efforts to develop the transportation corridor from the Lower Mainland to Kamloops, Revelstoke and Golden. In the second section of the book, Harvey deals with the Crowsnest Pass and the route along the American border to Hope.

Volume two looks at Central and Northern B.C., particularly the Yellowhead Pass to the mouth of the Skeena River and B.C. north of the Skeena.

Harvey also examines the political manoeuvers that were often behind transportation decisions of years gone by.

The books provide a lively read for anyone interested in the forces that shaped today's provincial transportation network and are available in the ministry library in Victoria.

Bob Harvey, former Transportation and Highways DM, and now historical author.

The Road Runner is produced entirely in-house by the communications branch of the Ministry of Transportation and Highways and may not be reprinted or republished without permission. Story ideas, submissions and letters are always welcome and may be submitted by e-mail to Bruce Methven at Bruce.Methven@gems1.gov.bc.ca; or write us at the following address: Communications Branch, Ministry of Transportation and Highways, 5B-940 Blanshard St., Victoria, B.C. V8W 9T5. Phone: (250) 356-9048; Fax (250) 356-7706.

The Intranet and you

By Doug Collinge, technology leader

The MoTH Intranet is being developed as an easy-to-use platform for staff to publish material intended specifically for a ministry audience.

The design is decentralized for quick and easy development and structured to provide standard functions to the authors and consistency for readers.

The MoTH Intranet steering committee recently approved the site for actual use, effectively taking it off the drawing board and placing it in the hands of users.

Readers of the electonic version of the Road Runner can visit the Intranet by clicking here:

MoTH Intranet

First-time readers should check out the "intro site", which explains how the site works and includes a list of frequently asked questions. There are already some comprehensive ministry publications available, particularly from the human resources branch.

Anyone searching for specific information can try using the "searching" button, which will activate a search of all MoTH Intranet Web sites.

Like all Web sites, the Intranet is in continuous development. In order to manage this change in an effective way, a committee for overseeing the Intranet and its standards is being set up.

Making inquiries and comments about your Intranet is easy.

Simply click on the "contact us" button that appears on every Intranet page and send a message to the lead administrator.

For those who wish to disseminate information to the general public, the communications branch operates a centralized Internet service.

From the Archives

Larry Patterson goes full circle

Larry Patterson now

Since Larry was last seen in the 1974 Road Runner, he has really moved around the ministry.

After working as an aide with the traffic branch headquarters, his next stop was in Vernon as development approvals assistant. In 1982, he took a position in Lillooet as district technician. After "five years, one month and 13 days," as he puts it, Larry made a successful bid for a position as maintenance systems technician in region three. Within a year, privatization had made his position redundant. Larry became acting district highways manager in Golden and later competed for, and won, a position as Cranbrook district highways manager.

After nine years, he became regional traffic technician and started the traffic section in the region. As this makes the third time he has lived in Nelson, it would appear that Larry has come full circle.

"LARRY T. PATTERSON is a new member or the Traffic Branch Headquarters staff as an Engineering Aide3. Larry transferred from Paving Branch and was formerly in the Materials Testing and Maintenance Branches. Larry is a BCIT graduate and has worked in Region 3 for the last one and one-half years."

– Road Runner, January 1974

Truck stop a "win-win" situation

Question: What do a steep grade, urinating truckers and unhappy neighbours add up to?

Answer: Perhaps as much as several thousand dollars, thanks to an idea of Cariboo district highways manager Tracy Cooper.

It all started back in 1995 after the ministry created a brake check on Highway 97 just north of Williams Lake at the top of a seven per cent downgrade.

On two occasions before the brake check was put in place, truckers had lost control on the five kilometre section and ended up going right through the town of Williams Lake, fortunately without loss of life or property damage.

However, it soon became apparent that some truckers using the new brake check were also using nearby bushes to relieve themselves, an activity that prompted residents of a nearby subdivision to complain to the ministry.

"That was the point at which we decided to put up a privacy fence to shield the area and discourage truckers from using the bushes," recalls Cooper.

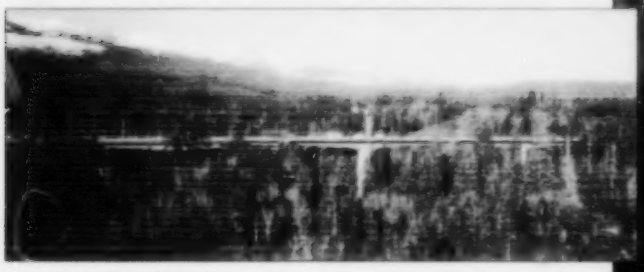
From then on, he worked to develop the idea of selling advertising targeted to truckers and applying the proceeds to maintain a portable toilet.

It took two years, but the idea was approved earlier this year by the government's fees and licensing committee.

The ministry is now in the process of tendering the opportunity for a private company to sell 47 advertising spaces at the brake check and in exchange, maintain the toilet at the site.

"Upwards of 150 commercial truckers a day use the brake check area and the idea of signing and toilets at the brake check is a win-win for everyone," Cooper says.

Tsable River Bridge receives another award



Above: Tsable River Bridge

Right: (Left to Right) Tom Rogers, Scott MacDonald, Meiric Preece and Rafael Manzanarez. Rogers and Preece represent N.D. Lea Consultants, and Manzanarez is with T-Y-Lin International

The Tsable Bridge on the Vancouver Island Highway Project received its second award of the year at the Canadian consulting engineering awards ceremony, held Oct. 20 in Toronto.

The award, which was presented in the building and structures category, came just several months after the bridge garnered an award of excellence from the Consulting Engineers of B.C.

Such recognition is a gratifying tribute to teamwork, according to the project's supervisor.

"The success of the bridge depended upon a lot of people," says the ministry's Scott MacDonald. "I was just lucky enough to be one of those people."

The bridge is located about 22 kilometres south of Courtenay on the Inland Island Highway.

Tsable is the largest bridge on the island, as well as the most expensive. Given the enormous challenges of the $15 million project, it is even more notable that it came in on time and under budget.

Building the structure involved building a 400-metre deck using the cast-in-place balanced cantilever method. The bridge was essentially built outward from two piers and the end abutments until the four spans joined. Instead of using the more common steel construction design, concrete was alternately poured into a cell box segment that spanned out from either side of the pier tops supported by a "travelling form", a carriage-like assembly that could be moved to either end of the span. To pour and cast a subsequent segment, the travelling form was anchored to the previously-cast segment. The project also included the 230-metre approaches to the bridge.

> ***"The success of the bridge depended upon a lot of people," says the ministry's Scott MacDonald. "I was just lucky enough to be one of those people."***

During construction, once a segment had cured as a hollow concrete cell, attached post-tensioning strands were squeezed to join all segments together—80 in total. The cross-section of the Tsable Bridge has the largest single cell trapezoid box in North America.

This particular construction method was selected because it was cost effective and minimized environmental impact. Vancouver's Knight Street Bridge is the only other cast-in-place segmental bridge in the province.

The level of environmental protection achieved on the Tsable River crossing is the result of avoiding making a significant impact on the surrounding river valley. After examining numerous alignments, the selected crossing was accepted by fisheries agencies on the condition that there would be no encroachment on the floodplain.

When it came to construction, the bridge was built from the middle outwards to protect the 22-kilometre river course, which is an important salmon and trout producing system. This rich eco-system of the immediate area also includes Roosevelt elk, black bears, cougars, cutthroat trout, steelhead and several species of salmon. Hummingbirds, warblers, bald eagles and blue herons live along the banks.

The bridge is high and long enough to span major environmental sensitivities in the valley and, by placing the middle pier on an island in the river, the river valley was virtually unaffected.

REGIONAL ROUNDUP

Region 6

"Spirited" beavers enliven stakeout

By Debra Crozier-Smith

Vancouver Island Region has been tying up the ends of another busy construction season. But amid the bustle, staff found time for other important initiatives. Kudos go to Bonnie Whipple, regional manager of finance and administration, who headed up what turned out to be the most successful Public Employees Community Services Fundraiser drive this region has seen. Her team's dedication and commitment increased participation by almost 40 per cent this year and donations went up by about 50 per cent. Congratulations to Bonnie and team members Dave Edgar, Bob Pratt, Bob Hickman and Jane Reynes.

It seems this region's spirit is not confined to charity drives. A Misty Creek project includes a tale about 'spirits' of quite another kind! Misty Lake project supervisor Steve Woodbridge and environmental consultant Lynn Broekheusen decided to live-trap and relocate a pair of adolescent beavers, whose dam was causing water to back up onto the highway.

Capturing the critters involved several virtually sleepless nights for our team while they crouched in the bushes waiting for their quarry to climb into the trap. On night number three, after hours of fruitless waiting, Lynn decided to exercise a little public spirit and clean up some of the litter lying around the area. Just before morning, she found an old vodka bottle and tossed it into the beaver trap. A few minutes later, one of the beavers crawled into the trap.

The next night, the remaining beaver still refused to cooperate so, as a joke, the vodka bottle was again placed in the trap. Sure enough, the rodent climbed in. Coincidence? The beavers were last seen swimming off into the sunset in their new location. They are gone, but not necessarily forgotten, as Steve reports that an annoyed beaver can make quite a mess in the back of a ministry truck!

Region 3

Mother Nature contributes to busy season

By Cindi Trowbridge

The Kootenays region continues to be a beehive of activity, due to planned projects as well as those brought about by Mother Nature.

In July, a 30 by 50 metre section of Highway 23 about 36 kilometres north of Revelstoke was washed out by Holdich Creek after a 200-metre long concrete tunnel under the highway became clogged with mud and debris carried by heavy rains and melting snow. About 60,000 cubic metres of fill was carried away. A ferry was quickly put into service to move traffic around the site. On Dec. 1, the highway re-opened to two-way traffic after crews finished building a concrete arch culvert. The project will be completed next spring.

On Nov. 12, a 100-metre section of Highway 31 at Coffee Creek, north of Nelson, was washed away by heavy rains. The road opened to single lane traffic on Nov. 14. Work is now under

Continued on page 7

Region 5

Nisga'a Highway upgrade

By David Belford

The Nisga'a Highway upgrade project, located 60 kilometres north of Terrace, will eventually upgrade 91 kilometres of a gravel resource road in the Nass Valley to a 70 km/h, two-lane paved standard. This will improve access for over 3,000 residents of the Nass Valley who depend on the provincial highway system to reach goods and services in the Terrace area.

Construction began this summer with the clearing and realignment of a 4.6 kilometre section from Sand Lake to Lava Lake and rebuilding an eight kilometre section beside the Nass River east of the W.D. Mckay Bridge.

"The road has been rebuilt, re-aligned and raised above flood levels east of Kesdin Camp to the Big Kwinhak Bridge on the road to Laxgalts'ap (Greenville)," said Dave St.Thomas, project manager for the Nisga'a Highway upgrade. "Engineering and design is under way for the section west of Zaulzap Creek." About $6.5 million has been spent this year for design, contract and day labour on the upgrade project.

Once the upgrade is finished in 2004, the Nisga'a Highway will accommodate 100 per cent legal axle loading throughout the year. The legal axle loading is critical, as the highway serves the needs of both the forest resource industry and a growing tourism market.

Highway Constructors Ltd. is the employer for construction labour and through its employment equity program, 62 Nisga'a people have been employed so far.

REGIONAL ROUNDUP

Region 4

John Hart Bridge under way

By Ron Wiebe

Getting the John Hart Bridge and interchange project off the ground has occupied the efforts of many central north east staffers over the past year. With the design-build contractor now on board and construction under way, MoTH can now settle into its role as manager of the project for the next two construction seasons.

Elsewhere, a sizeable amount of the region four budget was again invested in Peace Country, where we continued with the upgrade of several rural roads that serve both residential and industrial users. The current boom in the oil and gas industry shows no signs of abating in the near future and the premier's recent announcement of phase two of the oil and gas initiative ensures that further road upgrading will keep staff busy for some time to come.

Local officials from Prince George were on hand to break ground for construction of the south side approaches to the John Hart Bridge. From left, Mayor Colin Kinsley; MLA for Prince George North Paul Ramsey and Frank Harmon, local vice president of the International Union of Operating Engineers.

Efforts are continuing to develop the Highway 97 corridor management plan between Cache Creek and the junction of Highway 39 near Mackenzie. Recently, the City of Prince George and the ministry joined forces to develop what will become a key component of the overall plan. The Prince George transportation planning study will result in recommendations for the long-term interaction between provincial and municipal road networks. In addition, the study will provide input to the transportation component of the official community plan update and will produce a cycling network plan for the city as part of its recommendation. This study should be finished by July 2000.

Region 1

Focus on Cape Horn, Vedder Canal

By Brenda Jones

In the largely rural and suburban Fraser Valley, the Highway 1: Sumas to Vedder Canal project managed by Wilfred Fry is now complete. The project, officially opened by the minister on Nov. 18, included placing a single steel span over the relocated Sumas canal, building new Highway 1 westbound lanes and improving the access ramps at the No. 3 Road interchange. This work also eliminated the only at-grade crossing left between Horseshoe Bay and Kamloops. The project came in on schedule and under budget.

Meanwhile, in the highly-congested urban setting of the Cape Horn interchange, the 4.7 million Coleman Avenue to United Boulevard project team of project director Brian Stone and project manager Cliff Ramsay put a new traffic pattern in place on Nov. 17. The new traffic pattern will improve road safety and ease driver frustration. From Colony Farm Road to Cape Horn and the United Boulevard Loop on Highway 7, westbound traffic has been separated into different traffic streams using median barriers, a new traffic signal and lane widening. A new on-ramp from Highway 7 to Highway 1 westbound will open Dec. 15 with final project completion in May. Additional information can be obtained from the project Web site at:

http://www.th.gov.bc.ca/BCHighways/capehorn/capehorn.htm

Local MLA and Minister for Employment and Investment Mike Farnworth was given a guided tour of the project by Cliff Ramsay on Nov. 10 to help educate the community regarding the new traffic pattern on Highway 7 at the Cape Horn interchange.

REGIONAL ROUNDUP

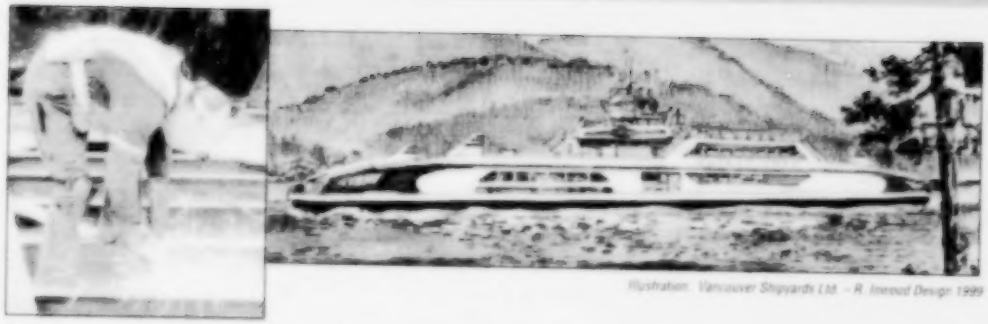


Illustration: Vancouver Shipyards Ltd. – R. Inwood Design 1999

The sleek new Osprey 2000 (left) will be in service in time for this coming summer. Skilled tradespeople are working in shifts to ensure the vessel is ready on time.

Region 3 "...busy season" *(continued from page 5)*

way to rebuild the highway to two-lane standard. Just one day after the Coffee Creek washout, a similar event took place on Highway 23 at Halcyon Hotsprings, about 36 kilometres north of Nakusp. The highway re-opened to traffic on Nov. 17.

The new 80-vehicle Kootenay Lake Ferry being built on the shore of Kootenay Lake in Nelson is taking shape and about 50 trade workers are now on site. The vessel will be launched for operational trials next May.

Work on two bridge projects in the East Kootenays has wound down for the winter. Piles have been driven and stringers have been erected for the 75-metre long Michel Mouth Bridge that spans the Michel Creek near Sparwood. Construction on the West and North Fernie Bridges is also well under way. The piers have been completed and girders have been installed. Completion is planned for next summer. The contractor has established a Web site for the Fernie bridges project at:

www.ferniebridges.com.

Region 2

Monte Creek completed ahead of schedule/under budget

By Jim Davidson

Region two had one of its most productive construction seasons ever with almost $40 million of capital investment, including work on Cache Creek to the Rockies, and $30-million of rehabilitation work being delivered throughout the Thompson-Okanagan. These amounts are over and above the major commitment staff throughout the region made to flood fighting and repair work this spring, summer and fall.

One of the highlights of the season took place on December 13 when Minister Harry Lali and Kamloops MLA Cathy MacGregor opened the $15.9 million Monte Creek interchange on the Trans-Canada Highway east of Kamloops. The project was completed 11 months ahead of schedule and under budget. Congratulations go to project manager Barrie LeBlond, his project team and to Brentwood Enterprises Ltd. of Kamloops, Cortez Construction of Kamloops and Coquitlam Ridge Construction of Port Coquitlam on a job well done. The project was the third phase of a four year, $44-million construction program that has resulted in four laning 12.5 kilometres of the Trans-Canada Highway, building three new interchanges, a new railway overpass and new frontage roads for local traffic east of Kamloops.

Monte Creek interchange

New Places, New Faces

The following individuals have been confirmed in new positions since September 1, 1999.

EMPLOYEE	LOCATION	POSITION	EFFECTIVE DATE
Dianne Anderson	Thompson-Okanagan Region	Regional Office Assistant	November 1
Nahid Badiei-Arani	Vancouver Island Highway Project	Accounts Clerk	September 10
Lyle Beeching	Thompson-Okanagan Region	Designer	November 1
Dan Bella	South Okanagan District	Area Manager, Roads	September 7
Ian Broocke	Motor Carrier Commission	Director and Secretary	October 7
Anita Buist	Fraser Valley District	District Clerk	September 7
Susan Cox	Human Resources Branch	Organization and Classification Officer	November 1
Rex Crider	South Coast Region	Manager, Geotechnical Operations	September 13
Joanne Dahlen	South Peace District	District Office Manager	October 4
Giesila Decker	South Coast Region	Regional Financial Clerk	November 1
Bruce Fazan	South Coast Region	Regional Construction Aide	October 12
Jean Fricker	South Coast Region	Human Resources Technician	October 4
Jim Gallagher	South Coast Region	Regional Construction Aide	October 12
Ernie Gross	South Coast Region	Engineering Assistant, Projects	October 1
John Hall	Thompson-Okanagan Region	Electrician	November 1
Wayne Keiser	Howe Sound District	District Highways Manager	October 1
Kevin Lovestrom	South Coast Region	Regional Construction Aide	October 12
Craig McLeod	South Coast Region	Regional Paving Aide	October 12
Bruce Methven	Communications Branch	Media Relations Coordinator	November 1
Ardis Myette	Human Resources Branch	Training Advisor	October 12
Paul Pearce	North West Region	Manager, System Services	October 18
Nancy Priddle	South Coast Region	Electrical Draftsperson	November 8
Lori Rossi	South Coast Region	Property Agent Assistant	September 28
James Sandever	Investment Management Branch	Manager, Investment Management	September 7
Shelley Shields	Office of the Superintendent	Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent	October 4
Abid Sivic	South Coast Region	Electrical Special Project Engineer	November 1
Johann Slam	North West Region	Snow Avalanche Assistant	November 4
Val Visotzky	Bulkley Lakes District	Avalanche Assistant Technician	November 8
Gordon Wagner	Central/North East Region	Manager, Design and Field Engineering	September 27
Doug Wilson	Bulkley Lakes District	Snow Avalanche Technician	September 5
Debra Zink	South Coast Region	Project Management Technician	September 20

Article 29 now online

Ministry staff can check out the latest activities of the Article 29 committee on the Intranet by clicking here:

Article 29